LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 1404
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

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There is, perhaps, no more striking example of the credulity of man than the wide-spread belief in immortality. This idea includes not only the belief that death is not the end of what we call life, but that personal identity involving memory persists beyond the grave. So determined is the ordinary individual to hold fast to this belief that, as a rule, he refuses to read or to think upon the subject lest it cast doubt upon his cherished dream. Of those who may chance to look at this contribution, many will do so with the determination not to be convinced, and will refuse even to consider the manifold reasons that might weaken their faith. I know that this is true, for I know the reluctance with which I long approached the subject and my firm determination not to give up my hope. Thus the myth will stand in the way of a sensible adjustment to facts.

Even many of those who claim to believe in immortality still tell themselves and others that neither side of the question is susceptible of proof. Just what can these hopeful ones believe that the word "proof" involves? The evi-

dence against the persistence of personal consciousness is as strong as the evidence of gravitation, and much more obvious. It is as convincing and unassailable as the proof of the destruction of wood or coal by fire. If it is not certain that death ends personal identity and memory, then almost nothing that man accepts as true is susceptible of proof.

The beliefs of the race and its individuals are relics of the past. Without careful examination no one can begin to understand how many of man's cherished opinions have no foundation in fact. The common experience of all men should teach them how easy it is to believe what they wish to accept. Experienced psychologists know perfectly well that if they desire to convince a man of some idea, they must first make him *want* to believe it. There are so many hopes, so many strong yearnings and desires attached to the doctrine of immortality that it is practically impossible to create in any mind the wish to be mortal. Still, in spite of strong desires, millions of people are filled with doubts and fears that will not down. After all, is it not better to look the question squarely in the face and find out whether we are harboring a delusion?

It is customary to speak of a "belief in im-

mortality." First, then, let us see what is meant by the word "belief." If I take a train in Chicago at noon, bound for New York, I believe I will reach that city the next morning. I believe it because I have been to New York. I have read about the city, I have known many other people who have been there, and their stories are not inconsistent with any known facts in my own experience. I have even examined the time tables and I know just how I will go and how long the trip will take. In other words, when I board the train for New York, I believe I will reach that city because I have *reason* to believe it.

If, instead, I wanted to see Timbuktu or some other point on the globe where I had never been, or of which I had only heard, I still know something about geography, and if I did not I could find out about the place I wished to visit. Through the encyclopedia and other means of information, I could get a fair idea of the location and character of the country or city, the kind of people who lived there and almost anything I wished to know, including the means of transportation and the time it would take to go and return. I already am satisfied that the earth is round. I know about its size. I know the extent of its land

and water. I know the names of its countries; I know perfectly well that there are many places on its surface that I have never seen. I can easily satisfy myself as to whether there is any such place and how to get there, and what I shall do when I arrive.

But if I am told that next week I shall start on a trip to Goofville; that I shall not take my body with me; that I shall stay for all eternity: can I find a single fact connected with my journey—the way I shall go, the time of the journey, the country I shall reach, its location in space, the way I shall live there—or anything that would lead to a rational belief that I shall really make the trip? Have I ever known anyone who has made the journey and returned? If I am really to believe, I must try to get some information about all these important facts.

But people hesitate to ask questions about life after death. They do not ask, for they know that only silence comes out of the eternal darkness of endless space. If people really believed in a beautiful, happy, glorious land waiting to receive them when they died; if they believed that their friends would be waiting to meet them; if they believed that all pain and suffering would be left behind: why should

they live through weeks, months, and even years of pain and torture while a cancer eats its way to the vital parts of the body? Why should one fight off death? Because he does *not* believe in any real sense: he only hopes. Everyone knows that there is no real evidence of any such state of bliss; so we are told not to search for proof. We are to accept through faith alone. But every thinking person knows that faith can only come through belief. Belief implies a condition of mind that accepts a certain idea. This condition can be brought about only by evidence. True, the evidence may be simply the unsupported statement of your grandmother; it may be wholly insufficient for reasoning men; but, good or bad, it must be enough for the believer or he could not believe.

Upon what evidence, then, are we asked to believe in immortality? There is no evidence. One is told to rely on faith, and no doubt this serves the purpose so long as one can believe blindly whatever he is told. But if there is no evidence upon which to build a positive belief in immortality, let us examine the other side of the question. Perhaps evidence can be found to support a positive conviction that immortality is a delusion.

The belief in immortality expresses itself in two different forms. On the one hand, there is a belief in the immortality of the "soul." This is sometimes interpreted to mean simply that the identity, the consciousness, the memory of the individual persists after death. On the other hand, many religious creeds formulated a belief in "the resurrection of the body" —which is something else again. It will be necessary to examine both forms of this belief in turn.

The idea of continued life after death is very old. It doubtless had its roots back in the childhood of the race. In view of the limited knowledge of primitive man, it was not unreasonable. His dead friends and relatives visited him in dreams and visions and were present in his feeling and imagination until they were forgotten. Therefore the lifeless body did not raise the question of dissolution, but rather of duality. It was thought that man was a dual being possessing a body and a soul as separate entities, and that when a man died, his soul was released from his body to continue its life apart. Consequently, food and drink were placed upon the graves of the dead to be used in the long journey into the unknown. In modified forms, this belief in the

duality of man persists to the present day. But primitive man had no conception of life as having a beginning and an end. In this he was like the rest of the animals. Today, everyone of ordinary intelligence knows how life begins, and to examine the beginnings of life leads to inevitable conclusions about the way life ends. If man has a soul, it must creep in somewhere during the period of gestation and growth.

All the higher forms of animal life grow from a single cell. Before the individual life can begin its development, it must be fertilized by union with another cell; then the cell divides and multiplies until it takes the form and pattern of its kind. At a certain regular time the being emerges into the world. During its term of life millions of cells in its body are born, die, and are replaced until, through age, disease, or some catastrophe, the cells fall apart and the individual life is ended.

It is obvious that but for the fertilization of the cell under right conditions, the being would not have lived. It is idle to say that the initial cell has a soul. In one sense it has life; but even that is precarious and depends for its continued life upon union with another cell of the proper kind. The human mother is the bearer of probably ten thousand of one kind of cell,

and the human father of countless billions of the other kind. Only a very small fraction of these result in human life. If the unfertilized cells of the female and the unused cells of the male are human beings possessed of souls, then the population of the world is infinitely greater than has ever been dreamed. Of course no such idea as belief in the immortality of the germ cells could satisfy the yearnings of the individual for a survival of life after death.

If that which is called a "soul" is a separate entity apart from the body, when, then, and where and how was this soul placed in the human structure? The individual began with the union of two cells, neither of which had a soul. How could these two soulless cells produce a soul? I must leave this search to the metaphysicians. When they have found the answer, I hope they will tell me, for I should really like to know.

We know that a baby may live and fully develop in its mother's womb and then, through some shock at birth, may be born without life. In the past, these babies were promptly buried. But now we know that in many such cases, where the bodily structure is complete, the machine may be set to work by artificial respiration or electricity. Then it will run like

any other human body through its allotted term of years. We also know that in many cases of drowning, or when some mishap virtually destroys life without hopelessly impairing the body, artificial means may set it in motion once more, so that it will complete its term of existence until the final catastrophe comes. Are we to believe that somewhere around the stillborn child and somewhere in the vicinity of the drowned man there hovers a detached soul waiting to be summoned back into the body by a pulmotor? This, too, must be left to the metaphysicians.

The beginnings of life yield no evidence of the beginnings of a soul. It is idle to say that the something in the human being which we call "life" is the soul itself, for the soul is generally taken to distinguish human beings from other forms of life. There is life in all animals and plants, and at least potential life in inorganic matter. This potential life is simply unreleased force and matter—the great storehouse from which all forms of life emerge and are constantly replenished. It is impossible to draw the line between inorganic matter and the simpler forms of plant life, and equally impossible to draw the line between plant life and animal life, or between other forms of animal life and what we human beings are pleased

to call the highest form. If the thing which we call "life" is itself the soul, then cows have souls; and, in the very nature of things, we must allow souls to all forms of life and to inorganic matter as well.

Life itself is something very real, as distinguished from the soul. Every man knows that his life had a beginning. Can one imagine an organism that has a beginning and no end? If I did not exist in the infinite past, why should I, or could I, exist in the infinite future? "But," say some, "your consciousness, your memory may exist even after you are dead. This is what we mean by the soul." Let us examine this point a little.

I have no remembrance of the months that I lay in my mother's womb. I cannot recall the day of my birth nor the time when I first opened my eyes to the light of the sun. I cannot remember when I was an infant, or when I began to creep on the floor, or when I was taught to walk, or anything before I was five or six years old. Still, all of these events were important, wonderful, and strange in a new life. What I call my "consciousness," for lack of a better word and a better understanding, developed with my growth and the crowding experiences I met at every turn. I have a hazy recollection of the burial of a boy soldier who

was shot toward the end of the Civil War. He was buried near the schoolhouse when I was seven years old. But I have no remembrance of the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, although I must then have been eight years old. I must have known about it at the time, for my family and my community idolized Lincoln, and all America was in mourning at his death. Why do I remember the dead boy soldier who was buried a year before? Perhaps because I knew him well. Perhaps because his family was close to my childish life. Possibly because it came to me as my first knowledge of death. At all events, it made so deep an impression that I recall it now.

"Ah, yes," say the believers in the soul, "what you say confirms our own belief. You certainly existed when these early experiences took place. You were conscious of them at the time, even though you are not aware of it now. In the same way, may not your consciousness persist after you die, even though you are not aware of the fact?"

On the contrary, my fading memory of the events that filled the early years of my life leads me to the opposite conclusion. So far as these incidents are concerned, the mind and consciousness of the boy are already dead. Even now, am I fully alive? I am seventy-one

years old. I often fail to recollect the names of some of those I knew full well. Many events do not make the lasting impression that they once did. I know that it will be only a few years, even if my body still survives decay, when few important matters will even register in my mind. I know how it is with the old. I know that physical life can persist beyond the time when the mind can fully function. I know that if I live to an extreme old age, my mind will fail. I shall eat and drink and go to my bed in an automatic way. Memory—which is all that binds me to the past—will already be dead. All that will remain will be a vegetative existence; I shall sit and doze in the chimney corner, and my body will function in a measure even though the ego will already be practically dead. I am sure that if I die of what is called "old age," my consciousness will gradually slip away with my failing emotions! I shall no more be aware of the near approach of final dissolution than is the dying tree.

I am aware that now and then at long intervals there is a man who preserves his faculties until a late period of his life. I know that these cases are very, very rare. No superstition needs to be called into service to account for the unusual things that are incident to life. There may be those who retain,

in a measurable degree, consciousness and mental activity beyond the time of the ordinary mortal. Still, everyone with the least information knows that it is almost a universal rule that the body declines with age, and that those who live a long life gradually yield their intellectual activity until they reach the period of senility and unconsciousness.

In primitive times, before men knew anything about the human body or the universe of which it is a part, it was not unreasonable to believe in spirits, ghosts, and the duality of man. For one thing, celestial geography was much simpler then. Just above the earth was a firmament in which the stars were set, and above the firmament was heaven. The place was easy of access and in dreams the angels were seen going up and coming down on a ladder. But now we have a slightly more adequate conception of space and the infinite universe of which we are so small a part. Our great telescopes reveal countless worlds and planetary systems which make our own sink into utter insignificance in comparison. We have every reason to think that beyond our sight there is endless space filled with still more planets, so infinite in size and number that no brain has the smallest conception of their extent. Is there any reason to think that in this universe,

with its myriads of worlds, there is no other life so important as our own? Is it possible that the inhabitants of the earth have been signaled out for special favor and endowed with souls and immortal life? Is it at all reasonable to suppose that any special account is taken of the human atoms that forever come and go upon this planet?

If man has a soul that persists after death, that goes to a heaven of the blessed or to a hell of the damned, where are these places? It is not so easily imagined as it once was. How does the soul make its journey? What does immortal man find when he gets there, and how will he live after he reaches the end of endless space? We know that the atmosphere will be absent; that there will be no light, no heat—only the infinite reaches of darkness and frigidity.

If there is a future place for the abode of the spirits of the dead, where is this place? Trusting people have made pictures and mental images of this abode of the dead. The revelation of St. John treats rather specifically of this far-off land, but it is evident that St. John was a psychopath and his case would be plainly recognized today. True, this picture of St. John's is not very alluring to intelligent men.

Still, trusting and confiding mortals have visioned in words, at least, a land where families would be re-united and neighbors and friends come together once more. In this smug little place, fashioned upon experiences of life upon this mundane sphere husbands and wives, long parted, will be united. Parents and children, and grandparents and grandchildren, too, will assemble in families in that land of the blessed and the dead.

These conceptions were formed early in the history of man, in fact, it has only been in recent years that we have had any knowledge or vision of the immensity of space and of the impossibility of any such place as is visioned by the credulous and trusting. We know now that the earth revolves upon its axis at a terrific speed. This motion makes a complete revolution in twenty-four hours. We know down to the second of time that no spot bears the same relation to space as it did before. If one who dies at midnight has a soul and starts on his trip to Heaven, he goes in an opposite direction from one who dies at noon, and the chances to meet under any circumstances which can be conceived would grow less as they traveled on. Besides this revolution on its axis, the earth is traveling at an inconceivable speed around the sun, which, at all times, is

about ninety-three million miles away. This complete journey is made once a year. In its orbit around the sun it travels more than a thousand miles a minute. This constant appalling speed would evidently add to the confusion of two mortals locating themselves in the same spot in space, even though they had souls. The atmosphere, even in its most attenuated form, does not reach over five hundred miles away from the earth, and for only a small fraction of that space could life as we conceive it exist. And when the earth leaves a given spot in space the atmosphere is carried along with it. In addition to the motion of the earth on its axis and its unthinkable speed in its circuit around the sun, the whole solar system is traveling around the pole star, accompanied no doubt by many other systems like our own; no one can tell how fast it goes or how far it goes, in what seems endless space. And these systems travel in turn around some other central point in the far-off Milky Way, and no one knows how many other apparently central points somewhere off amongst the stars and worlds and suns furnish foci around which the earth and all the systems constantly revolve. What possible means of locomotion could be furnished for mortals to find a place of rest. and what possible unimaginable guide

could pilot individuals going in different directions at all times of the day and night and all portions of the year and century, and other greater periods of time, to this haven of the blessed? All of these conceptions beggar any sort of imagination and make and substitute the wildest unthinkable dreams in place of real beliefs.

There are those who base their hope of a future life upon the resurrection of the body. This is a purely religious doctrine. It is safe to say that few intelligent men who are willing to look obvious facts in the face hold any such belief. Yet we are seriously told that Elijah was carried bodily to heaven in a chariot of fire, and that Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into heaven. The New Testament abounds in passages that support this doctrine. St. Paul states the tenet over and over again. In the fifteenth chapter of first Corinthians he says: "If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? . . . And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain . . . For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised." The Apostles' Creed says: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." This has been carried into substantially all the orthodox creeds; and while it is more or less

minimized by neglect and omission, it is still a cardinal doctrine of the orthodox churches.

Two thousand years ago, in Palestine, little was known of man, of the earth, or of the universe. It was then currently believed that the earth was only four thousand years old, that life had begun anew after the deluge about two thousand years before, and that the entire earth was soon to be destroyed. Today it is fairly well established that man has been upon the earth for a million years. During that long stretch of time the world has changed many times; it is changing every moment. At least three or four ice ages have swept across continents, driving death before them, carrying human beings into the sea or burying them deep in the earth. Animals have fed on man and on eash other. Every dead body, no matter whether consumed by fire or buried in the earth, has been resolved into its elements, so that the matter and energy that once formed human beings has fed animals and plants and other men. As the great naturalist, Fabre, has said: "At the banquet of life each is in turn a guest and a dish." Thus the body of every man now living is in part made from the bodies of those who have been dead for ages.

Yet we are still asked to believe in the resurrection of the body. By what alchemy, then,

are the individual bodies that have successfully fed the generations of men to be separated and restored to their former identities? And if I am to be resurrected, what particular *I* shall be called from the grave, from the animals and plants and the bodies of other men who shall inherit this body I now call my own? My body has been made over and over, piece by piece, as the days went by, and will continue to be so made until the end. It has changed so slowly that each new cell is fitted into the living part, and will go on changing until the final crisis comes. Is it the child in the mother's womb or the tottering frame of the old man that shall be brought back? The mere thought of such a resurrection beggars reason, ignores facts, and enthrones blind faith, wild dreams, hopeless hopes, and cowardly fears as sovereign of the human mind.

Some of those who profess to believe in the immortality of man—whether it be of his soul or his body—have drawn what comfort they could from the modern scientific doctrine of the indestructibility of matter and force. This doctrine, they say, only confirms in scientific language what they have always believed. This, however, is pure sophistry. It is probably true that no matter or force has ever been or ever

can be destroyed. But it is likewise true that there is no connection whatever between the notion that personal consciousness and memory persist after death and the scientific theory that matter and force are indestructible. For the scientific theory carries with it a corollary, that the forms of matter and energy are constantly changing through an endless cycle of new combinations. Of what possible use would it be, then, to have a consciousness that was immortal, but which, from the moment of death, was dispersed into new combinations, so that no two parts of the original identity could ever be reunited again?

These natural processes of change, which in the human being take the forms of growth, disease, senility, death, and decay, are essentially the same as the processes by which a lump of coal is disintegrated in burning. One may watch the lump of coal burning in the grate until nothing but ashes remains. Part of the coal goes up the chimney in the form of smoke; part of it radiates through the house as heat; the residue lies in the ashes on the hearth. So it is with human life. In all forms of life nature is engaged in combining, breaking down, and recombining her store of energy and matter into new forms. The thing we call

"life" is nothing other than a state of equilibrium which endures for a short span of years between the two opposing tendencies of nature —the one that builds up, and the one that tears down. In old age, the tearing-down process has already gained the ascendency, and when death intervenes, the equilibrium is finally upset by the complete stoppage of the building-up process, so that nothing remains but complete disintegration. The energy thus released may be converted into grass or trees or animal life; or it may lie dormant until caught up again in the crucible of nature's laboratory. But whatever happens, the man—the *You* and the *I*—like the lump of coal that has been burned, is gone—irrevocably dispersed. All the King's horses and all the King's men cannot restore it to its former unity.

The idea that man is a being set apart, distinct from all the rest of nature, is born of man's emotions, of his loves and hates, of his hopes and fears, and of the primitive conceptions of undeveloped minds. The *You* and the *I* which is known to our friends does not consist of an immaterial something called a "soul" which cannot be conceived. We know perfectly well what we mean when talk about this *You* and this *Me*: and it is equally plain that

the whole fabric that makes up our separate personalities is destroyed, dispersed, disintegrated beyond repair by what we call "death."

As a matter of fact, does *anyone* really believe in a future life? The faith does not simply involve the persistence of activity, but it has been stretched and magnified to mean a future world infinitely better than the earth. In this far-off land no troubles will harass the body or the soul. Eternity will be an eternity of bliss. Heaven, a land made much more delightful because of the union with those who have gone before. This doctrine has been taught so persistently through the years that men and women of strong faith in their dying moments have seen relatives and friends, long since dead, who have come to lead them to their heavenly home.

Does the conduct of the intense disciple show that he really believes that death is a glad deliverance? Why do men and women who are suffering torture on earth seek to prolong their days of agony? Why do victims of cancer being slowly eaten alive for months and years prefer enduring such pain rather than going to a land of bliss? Why will the afflicted travel all over the world and be cut to pieces by inches that they may stay a few weeks longer, in agony

and torture? The one answer that is made to this query is that the afflicted struggle to live because it is their duty to hang fast to mortal life, no matter what the pain or the expected joy in heaven. The answer is not true. The afflicted cling to life because they doubt their faith, and do not wish to let go of what they have, terrible as it is.

Those who refuse to give up the idea of immortality declare that nature never creates a desire without providing the means for its satisfaction. They likewise insist that all people, from the rudest to the most civilized yearn for another life. As a matter of fact, nature creates many desires which she does not satisfy; most of the wishes of men meet no fruition. But nature does not create any emotion demanding a future life. The only yearning that the individual has is to keep on living—which is a very different thing. This urge is found in every animal, in every plant. It is simply the momentum of a living structure: or, as Schopenhauer put it, "the will to live." What we long for is a continuation of our present state of existence, not an uncertain reincarnation in a mysterious world of which we know nothing. The idea of another life is created after men are convinced that this life ends.

I am not unmindful of those who base their hope of a future life on what they claim are the evidences furnished by the investigation of spiritualism. So far as having any prejudice against this doctrine, I have no more desire to disbelieve than I have as to any other theories of a future life. In fact, for many years, I have searched here for evidence that man still lives after all our senses show that he is dead. For more than fifty years until almost ten years past, I have given some attention to Spiritualism. I have read most of the important books of scientists: Alfred Russel Wallace, Crooks, Oliver Lodge, and the books of many other men of ability and integrity who believed that they had found their dead friends who had come back to them. Likewise, I have for years investigated what are called spiritual phenomena. I am satisfied that if any intelligent man, in possession of his senses, thoroughly investigates Spiritualism, he will find that there is no evidence to support his faith. At least nine-tenths of the phenomena can be set down as pure fraud and imposition. The evidence comes in the main from mediums who are ignorant, and whose tricks are clumsy in the extreme. Perhaps one-tenth of the manifestations are not the result of fraud but the evidence is entirely inadequate to prove the cause of the phenomena.

It is possible that there are phenomena which no one can explain. I have many times seen what are called manifestations of spirit-return that I could not explain, but all of these failed utterly to convince me of the communication of disembodied spirits. It does not follow that because the manifestations are strange and weird, and for the present unexplainable, that those phenomena show that life persists after death. In the realm of these manifestations, the evidence of scientists is worth no more than the evidence of other men. Most likely it is worth much less. The truth is that real scientists, outside of their special field, are more helpless than other men in detecting frauds and tricks. It is likewise true that most of the men of science, like Sir Oliver Lodge, have come to their conviction late in life, and under some great stress, which is calculated to unsettle the mind, in the particular field to which they appeal.

Sir Oliver Lodge lost his son in the great war. This was a sore bereavement to this eminent scientist. When one considers the greatness of Lodge, the clearness with which he discusses every scientific theory with which he deals, and then reads his book called "Raymond," in which he tells of his meetings with his beloved son, it is not difficult to see that

as to this bereavement his mind was unsettled and he is reaching out in the darkness to find what he so strongly wants.

Is it possible that any sort of proof could prove the existence of an individual after his decay? Suppose that some good fairy, distressed at my unbelief, should come to me with the offer to produce any evidence that I desired to satisfy me that I would see my loved ones after death; suppose I should tell this fairy that my father had been dead for twenty years; that I followed his lifeless body to the crematory where he was converted into ashes; that I desired to have him brought back to me as a living entity, and to stay in my house for a year, that I might not be deceived. Assume that when the year had passed I should go out and tell my neighbors and friends that my father had been living in my house, although he died two score years ago; suppose that they believed implicitly in my integrity and my judgment; even then, could I convince one person that my statement was true? Would they be right in doubting my word? After all, which is the more reasonable, that the dead have come back to life, or that I have become insane? All of my friends would say: "Poor fellow, I am sorry he has lost his mind." Against the universal experience of mankind

and nature, the dementia or the insanity of one man, or a thousand men, could count as nothing. The insane asylums of the world are filled with men who have these dreams and visions which are realities to them, but which no one else believes, because they are entirely at variance with well-known facts.

All men recognize the hopelessness of finding any evidence that the individual will persist beyond the grave. As a last resort, we are told that it is better that the doctrine be believed even if it is not true. We are assured that without this faith, life is only desolation and despair. However that may be, it remains that many of the conclusions of logic are not pleasant to contemplate; still, so long as men think and feel, at least some of them will use their faculties as best they can. For if we are to believe things that are not true, who is to write our creed? Is it safe to leave it to any man or organization to pick out the errors that we must accept? The whole history of the world has answered this question in a way that cannot be mistaken.

And after all, is the belief in immortality necessary or even desirable for man? Millions of men and women have no such faith; they go on with their daily tasks and feel joy and sorrow without the lure of immortal life. The

things that really affect the happiness of the individual are the matters of daily living. They are the companionship of friends, the games and contemplations. They are misunderstandings and cruel judgments, false friends and debts, poverty and disease. They are our joys in our living companions and our sorrows over those who die. Whatever our faith, we mainly live in the present—in the here and now. Those who hold the view that man is mortal are never troubled by metaphysical problems. At the end of the day's labor we are glad to lose our consciousness in sleep; and intellectually, at least, we look forward to the long rest from the stresses and storms that are always incidental to existence.

When we fully understand the brevity of life, its fleeting joys and unavoidable pains; when we accept the facts that all men and women are approaching an inevitable doom: the consciousness of it should make us more kindly and considerate of each other. This feeling should make men and women use their best efforts to help their fellow travelers on the road, to make the path brighter and easier as we journey on. It should bring a closer kinship, a better understanding, and a deeper sympathy for the wayfarers who must live a common life and die a common death.

Read 3-23-18